

# Christianity and Crisis

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## Contrasts at Christmas

CHRISTMAS does not really belong in the world in which we live. With its homely festivities, its stories of angels' songs and peace on earth, its exaltation of a baby, its sentimental wishes, there is something incongruous about it in a world of war and ruthless competition and bitter hatreds. Never perhaps since the days when Augustine wrote the *City of God* has the incongruity seemed more obvious than today. Then the great Empire which had ruled the Western World for centuries was crumbling into ruins. Chaos, insecurity and uncertainty faced the men of a dying world. In such a world why talk of angelic visitors, of shepherds and a stable and a baby? Augustine told them why. He wrote the *City of God* to proclaim to them that in this crumbling dying world the Church, which bore the name of that little Child, would stand secure and imperishable.

And today? We face a world not crumbling for lack of power but threatened with destruction because of its power. The most appalling fact of today is not the wreckage of war—ruined cities, starving people, chaos in Europe and in Asia. It is the revelation of power. Men have seen it focussed in the atomic bomb; but the bomb is only a symbol. It is only the last product of a surging extravagance of power undreamed of in the past. The Soviet Union on the one side, Britain and America on the other possess this power. The world is in their hands; its future set by their decisions. So the daily press, the journals, the speeches in Congress, the big industrialists and the little business men and the labor leaders and the men of the armed forces keep telling us. Power politics? What else is there today, for what else fills men's minds. They know there can be enough food and enough shelter for all. The days of scarcity need be no more. As Norman Cousins puts it "He (man) has at last unlocked enough of the world's secrets to provide for his needs on a world scale." It is distribution with which men must be concerned; and distribution means the exercise of power. They shudder at the atom bomb; but they know that, to paraphrase a famous saying, it is not the bomb which matters; it is the men behind the bomb. They wield the power.

And along comes Christmas in this world which lives trembling before the revelation of power. If it was incongruous in that chaotic world of 1500 years ago it is surely more so today. How can you hear angel songs above the drone of bombers in the sky? What is the use of dwelling on the picture of the manger and the Child when the world must decide what to do with a hundred million armed men? Why be concerned with the humble three of the Holy Family? It is the Big Three with whom we have to deal.

Well, that is all exaggerated for there are far more than 7000 who have not bowed the knee to the Baal of Power. There are countless ears catching the angel's songs. There are countless hearts touched with more than pleasant sentiment as they picture the Holy Family there in Bethlehem. And these "Christian souls" are right. Christmas is utterly incongruous in this world of power and yet Christmas is utterly and altogether—what shall we say?—timely? relevant? No, vastly more than that! Christmas alone is perfectly congruous, for Christmas brings to the surface those imperishable values for which men in all this struggle of power are really groping. It focusses men's thoughts, at least for the moment, upon the secret of ultimate power.

First note then that it is the children's festival. It is a great "birthday party." In the midst of ruthless power it reminds us of the love which lies at the heart of God, the tenderness and gentleness with which he would have men live day by day. The Holy Family is no pious phrase. Normal men and women respond to it. Normal men and women know that all the joyous centering of Christmas upon the children, all its quaint and homely and naive customs are congruous in the age of power because power is empty, power is tyrannous and meaningless for men unless it learns the lesson of the Holy Family. Its use is not to destroy but to enhance these intimate and universal joys. Let the wielders of power remember that!

And again, as the story takes us to the ordinary home, it takes us to the common man, the simplicity, the everydayness, the naturalness of life. The cattle, the ox and the ass, the smell of the hay, the dim light

of the flickering little lamp, the anxious Joseph and the radiant Mary—it is very simple and commonplace and within the range of all men's experience. In the story the shepherds come first, perhaps like Jolly Wat in the old ballad, laying at the feet of the baby all their most precious possessions.

Jesu I offer thee here my pipe  
My Skirt, my tarbox and my scrip.

The wise men follow the shepherds with their gold and frankincense and myrrh, great figures in that day, but not great enough; in the imagination of later days they become kings. But Christmas belongs not to the kings.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat  
And hath exalted the humble and meek.

The kings may kneel at the manger, but only as the shepherds give them room. Let the wielders of power remember that!

It all sums up finally in just what that verse of the Magnificat suggests. This is the day of the children, of love and tenderness and homeliness; but its

significance lies in the fact that these things express the ultimate in power. The Child born in Bethlehem is the Savior who is Christ the Lord—the Anointed One—the King. He is born to rule. His rule is in righteousness and justice and love. But it is none-the-less rule. There is no permanence in any other rule. No other kingdom can last. We have thought much in these war days of the suffering Christ. We have seen him on the cross taking up into himself the vast suffering of the world. But we need another emphasis now. This is the birthday of the Lord of all life, the King. He is no longer the gaunt and dying figure of the crucifix. He is the leader of the hosts of God, *Christus Victor*. He wrests the power from the hands of the proud and in the name of the transcendent God takes possession of it, for God's people everywhere. Why then be appalled and shuddering at the present world? This is the birthday of him to whom all power is given. Battles may be lost; but the war will be won.

*For unto you is born this day a Savior who is Christ the Lord.*  
E. L. P.

## “If Thine Enemy Hunger Feed Him”

Hunger and starvation on so wide a scale as will revolt the conscience of the world is developing in Germany. The mass misery, beggars description, particularly in Eastern Germany, where millions of refugees from Silesia and Czechoslovakia are being thrown into territories already unable to take care of their own. This situation has developed, partly because of the destruction of German industry and the dislocation of means of transportation during the war, partly because of the wholesale dismantling of industrial equipment for reparations and partly because of the policy of forced migrations of German populations in Eastern Europe.

Secretary Byrnes, in his report on Germany, suggests that it will be necessary to import food without payment into Germany for at least two years until German industry is sufficiently restored to produce the manufactured goods for export, which will be required to pay for its food imports.

But long range plans, however important, do not help to avert catastrophe this winter. The impending catastrophe is made more terrible by the fact that UNRRA is specifically prohibited from feeding Germans and that private and church relief organizations have been unable to ship food, because of government restrictions.

Bishops Oxnam and Sherrill, who have just returned from Germany, report that “millions have been torn from their homes, their personal property taken from them, and forced to migrate to Germany

under conditions that result in starvation and the unnecessary deaths of tens of thousands.” A private correspondent in Washington reports that the army will not act “because it takes for granted that ‘public opinion’ is hostile to any plan of feeding Germans at our expense.” Meanwhile Bishops Oxnam and Sherrill report that the army is now ready to import food at least into the U. S. zone, sufficient to maintain the daily ration at 1500 calories.

Even if it should prove correct that the army is now shipping food to the American zone, this is not necessarily an adequate policy considering the needs in all zones, and the special obligations which we have as a nation with surplus food supply. Meanwhile the army admits that the clothing shortage also is very severe, particularly in view of the fact that houses will have scant heat this winter. Despite this situation none of the relief organizations have been able to secure licenses for the shipment of either food or clothing. The national leadership in Washington has been discouragingly unready to acquaint the public with the facts or to take any steps which might seem in advance of “public opinion.”

For these reasons the churches ought to take the leadership first in making the public aware of the dimensions of this issue and secondly in bringing pressure upon the War and State Departments to grant the relief agencies licenses to ship food and clothing, but particularly clothing, into Germany.

R. N.

# No Room in the Inn\*

DAVID E. ROBERTS

Luke 2:7 "*There was no room for them in the inn.*"

IT is right that we should listen to the familiar words of the Christmas story as though we were hearing them for the first time. We can never cease to wonder at the new creation which God offers to us constantly. The Nativity can never become for us merely a precious bit of archaic lore, a cherished memory of a distant day. For it is the beginning of the story whereby we understand how God comes into the world for all times and for all men. Christmas is a recollection of something which *has* happened—yes; but it is also a recollection of something which is happening now.

Let us start the story afresh, then, seeing it as a contemporary event, like those painters who have depicted the Nativity in their own land and their own times—against the background of a New England winter or a Chinese landscape. Perhaps, for the moment, we should forget the outcome. perhaps our gladness will be spoiled if we feel compelled to look ahead and see that our rejoicing is linked to a career which will culminate upon a Cross. Perhaps, for the moment, it would startle us to be told that we are rejoicing because of the birth of one who will suffer and die. We give ourselves undividedly to the wonderful fact that God is here among us. *Immanuel*. For the moment, that is enough; and we need a respite from the haunting foreknowledge of what the world will do to the Son of God.

Yet the very fact that we want this respite is significant. It shows the kind of world we are living in, the kind of people we know ourselves to be. Who has not tried to put aside solemn thoughts and misgivings when a child is born into the world? For the moment—in the sheer gladness of this new life—we do not want to look forward to the years of struggle and bitterness, sickness and sin, that lie ahead. Maybe it's because we are sentimental, maybe it's because we have a sound yearning for the recovery of lost peace and decency; but, in any event, we wish for the moment that infants didn't have to grow up. We want to give ourselves wholeheartedly to the unalloyed joy of a life which has come into the world—fresh, unspoiled, and surrounded by love.

But this is a flickering, nostalgic mood, when we think of Christ, we *do* know what's coming—the Baptism, the temptations, the calling of the twelve, the wonderful ministry of teaching and healing, the conflict with hardened Pharisaism, the acclaim of

the mob, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Last Supper, the betrayal, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection—and then the long centuries when men should follow after, with their hearts burning within them as Jesus accompanies them along the road. And so, we cannot really forget what a fateful series of events God set going in Bethlehem on that morning; and when we reflect, we would not have them otherwise. We cannot rejoice at Christmastime unless we rejoice in the whole story; for the glory of God permeates it every step of the way. We cannot really affirm the beginning unless we affirm the culmination. If we feel joy, we must feel it through tears and mortification as we remember what the world did to the Son of God then, and what it does to Him as He comes to us today.

Naturally St. Luke knew the end of the story when he wrote this Christmas narrative. And surely he must have recognized the dramatic appropriateness of the fact that Jesus began his life by being shut out. "*There was no room for them in the inn.*" *Men tried to shut God out, but He was born in a manger just the same.*

Is it not the case that the saving powers are always those that we have tried to shut out? Whenever the light dawns, whenever a fresh access of hope lifts a man out of his sin and misery, whenever God's love breaks through and makes him a new creature—it always comes as something he has shut out. He has been willfully blind to it; he has allowed it to dry up inside; he has pressed it down, driven it out of mind, run away from it, disguised it, repudiated it, and tried to forget it. And when that man is rescued, despite himself, it is because although he has made no room for Christ in his heart, Christ has been born in him just the same. Like the birth of a new child in the world, the birth of the new man takes place in a way which we *cannot* prevent.

I hardly need dwell upon the fact that we are still shutting God out today. Jesus simply doesn't belong in this world. He doesn't belong where one has to make his living by competitive triumph over others. He doesn't belong where one maintains his own security by suspicion, ruthlessness, and a kind of foxy out-guessing of his opponents. He doesn't belong where men are so caught in wholesale destruction that they have time to think of Heaven only in the last fleeting moment when death is crashing down upon them. He doesn't belong where communities are held together only by fear of external foes; where the comradeship of allies is based squarely upon calculation of each other's power. He doesn't belong where millions are torn from their homes; where children are left without care, where

\* This Christmas sermon by Professor Roberts will appear in volume two of *Best Sermons*, 1946 Edition, published by Harper and Brothers in April, 1946.



enslaved peoples are tortured, and where decent young men die in the trenches, drown at sea and are shot down in the air. There is no room for Him here!

And we are tempted to cry out: "Oh gentle Son of God, don't come into such a world. It will destroy you. This is no place for sacrificial love. This is no place for someone who cares nothing for money, prestige and power. This is no place for someone who is ready to suffer agony and to confront hatred unflinchingly. This kind of a world will *break* you; it will work its utmost upon you and then cast you aside and forget you."

There is no room for Him here. That's a fact. But the other fact is that God comes into the world, nevertheless. He is born in a manger. He belongs to the outcast, the downtrodden, the humble. He is destined to be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—wounded for our transgressions, by whose stripes we are healed. He belongs to everything in the heart of man which is still capable of contrition and mercy.

And for that reason, He baffles us. The touches of wonder with which the Christmas story is surrounded are an indispensable part of it. Some years ago I heard Dr. J. V. Moldenhawer tell of how, when he was a child, he knew so little that he believed the Christmas story, just as St. Luke tells it. Then came a time when he knew so much—after studying higher criticism comparative religion, and philosophy—that he couldn't believe the miraculous setting of the story. But now, once again, he knows so little, that he believes it just as St. Luke tells it.

What did he mean? I think he meant that if Christian faith is reached at all, it must be reached through wonder. If we reflect upon it in an ordinary way, we come to the conclusion that Christmas couldn't possibly happen. By all the rules of common sense, men should long ago have learned what to expect of themselves. They should have reconciled themselves to war, selfishness and hatred, and come to terms with these hard facts as best they could. Indeed, many of us have become such experts in predicting what to expect that we have lost hope in the post-war world already. We can easily see through the pretensions of the so-called "perfectionists." We know that the people who try to act from saintly motives are frequently self-assertive and bad tempered. We have learned by hard experience to be suspicious of those impractical individuals who try to live in terms of pure love. We know how easily self-deception can enter in. We know how smothering and how intolerant sweet Christians can be. We know the harm that well-intentioned visionaries can do.

We are like the natives of the African forest who were suspicious of Albert Schweitzer because they had never dealt with a white man before who did not want to exploit them. Like them, we are ready

to protect ourselves against selfishness and tyranny as best we can; but we are not prepared for decency and generosity free from ulterior motives.

In fact, we are living in a world which wouldn't know what to make of the love of God if we saw it in the flesh. We say to ourselves: "If Christ were to come to earth today, would we not also fail to recognize Him? Or, might we not be like that Army officer who admitted that if he were the military governor of Palestine today and Christ were to come again, he would have to execute Him again?"

The very fact that we raise this as a hypothetical question shows how attenuated Christianity has become. We say: "If Christ were among us today." He *is* among us today. He is a living power in the world. We treat Him as the world has always treated him; but He is born in us today, nevertheless. We say to ourselves that it can't possibly happen, but it has happened.

This is assuredly a firm foundation for our joy. For we desperately need this God who can do wonderful things. We desperately need to have our calculations upset. In many respects, human affairs are much the same today as they have always been. But there is one overwhelming difference. Since Christ is here, we cannot get rid of the haunting realization that *He* is the one who really belongs. He is the one who depicts for us human life as God means it to be. We are the strangers; we are the outcasts. He baffles and confuses us because we ourselves are the ones who are out of line, out of joint, out of focus. We are the distorted image of God; He is the clear picture. And since He has come, since He is here, men can never completely lose this recollection of what they are meant to be—this hope, despite all their misery and hopelessness—of what they may yet become. For Christmas has left indelibly upon the imagination of mankind the vision of a restored humanity and a restored creation. In it we see every level of existence brought into peace and harmony around the babe lying in a manger—the stars in their courses, the animal kingdom of the sheep and oxen, the work of mankind in the shepherds and the wisdom of mankind in the Magi.

But someone may well ask how this "mere memory" can heal us—how it can bring every one of us back to the point of a new birth, starting afresh, unspoiled, surrounded by love. What about the mark left by all the long miseries of human history? What about the mark left by all the searing agonies and failures in the lives of each one of us?

I reply by concluding as I began. If Christmas is merely a memory of things past, it cannot heal us. But if it is an awakening to things present, it can be the most healing event we have ever known. If we can believe that the impossible has happened, and that, though we have shut Him out, God comes into our world just the same, a restored humanity

and a restored creation may be born again in us today.

Perhaps you are familiar with the story of a French soldier who was found suffering from amnesia. When he was picked up at a railroad station, he looked at his questioners blankly, and all he could say was: "I don't know who I am. I don't know who I am." Because he had been disfigured by facial wounds, there were three different families who claimed him as belonging to them. So he was taken to one village after another, where these different families lived, and allowed to walk around by himself. Finally, when he entered the third village, a sudden light of recognition came into his eyes, he walked unerringly down a side street, in through a tidy gate, and up the steps of his father's home. Like the Prodigal Son, he had "come to himself." The old familiar surroundings had restored his mind. Once again, he knew who he was and where he belonged.

Thus we hear the old familiar story of Bethlehem, like amnesia victims in a shell-shocked world, who have forgotten who we are and where we belong. And as we make our way with unerring steps down that side street, where a star stands over a manger, we know that we have found the way home. We know that we have come to the only place where men can be restored in mind and heart. We know that this memory of what happened long ago is at the same time a fresh awakening to what is happening now, through the suffering love of God towards his children. We know that although we may shut Christ out, the door of the manger stands open for all the world!

O holy child of Bethlehem  
Descend to us we pray.  
Cast out our sin and enter in;  
Be born in us today.

## Christian Deputation to Japan

WALTER W. VAN KIRK

THE Protestant church deputation which went to Japan four weeks ago for the purpose of renewing spiritual fellowship with the Christians of that country has returned to the United States. The trip was made entirely by air and the elapsed time each way was 38 flying hours.

The deputation included Dr. Douglas Horton of New York, Chairman of the American Committee of the World Council of Churches; Bishop James C. Baker of Los Angeles, Chairman of the International Missionary Council; Dr. Luman J. Shafer of New York, Chairman of the Japan Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America; and Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk of New York, Secretary of the Department of International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council of Churches.

The American churchmen were uncertain in their own minds as to how they would be received by their Christian brethren in Japan. Months of bombing by the Allied forces had resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, the laying waste of great industrial centers, the destruction of churches and the scattering of congregations. It would have been only human had the Christians of Japan been something less than cordial in their attitude toward the Christians of the nation primarily responsible for the defeat of their country. Such was not the case. Quite the contrary. The reception accorded the deputation was a deeply moving experience. There were expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving that the American churches had sent representatives to Japan so quickly following the war. Japanese Christians described the visitation

as a welcome adventure in ecumenical fellowship.

Destruction of church property in Japan reached frightful dimensions. In Tokyo 154 churches were destroyed, leaving only nine churches intact. In Osaka 46 churches are in ruins, in Hyogo, 45; in Kanagawa, 26. Of 2000 churches in Japan 455 are wholly or partially destroyed. Few pastors were killed in air raids but of 2000 pastors and teachers some 350 lost their homes. Despite this destruction the deputation is unanimous in its conclusion that the Christian community in Japan has survived the war and its accompanying persecution in a manner that augurs well for the future. Conferences were held with church leaders in Tokyo, Nagoya and Kyoto. In the latter city, Christian teachers and pastors from Osaka and Kobe participated in the discussions with the American churchmen. In all of these centers, and elsewhere, Japanese Christians evidenced an impatient eagerness to rebuild their schools and churches, re-assemble their congregations, and press forward in their efforts to evangelize Japan.

There were, to be sure, defections here and there. In isolated instances the curriculum of Christian schools was modified to meet the insistent demands of the Japanese military. The charter of certain of these schools was revised or modified in such a way as to minimize the emphasis upon Christian principles. In such schools, particularly those for boys, there was a discontinuance of chapel and bible study. The ceremonial bowing to the Emperor was practiced in some of the churches, as was the reciting of formal prayers for military victory.

In evaluating these defections it must be remem-

bered that Christians in Japan number not more than 400,000 Protestant and Roman Catholic in a total population of nearly 80,000,000. These Christians were harassed by the military police and hounded by the "thought" police. They were spied upon, gossiped about and ridiculed by a war indoctrinated public. That the Christian community in that country is today not only intact, but vigorously alive, is a tribute to the loyalty and steadfastness with which, in the main, it adhered to its convictions. Now that the war is over and the military influence is being liquidated the opinion is widespread that Christianity in Japan is confronted with an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate its superiority over Buddhism and Shintoism. The deputation is recommending that a small initial group of missionaries be sent to Japan as quickly as possible. Long range missionary relationships with the Christian community are yet to be determined.

The visiting churchmen were received in audience by the Emperor. To each member of the deputation the Emperor directed inquiries regarding the work of the American churches and the possible significance of Christianity in the reconstruction of Japan. This audience, widely reported in the Japanese press is believed considerably to have enhanced the prestige of the Christian movement in the mind of the Japanese public. Conferences were also had with Premier Shidehara; Minister of Education, Maeda; Minister of Public Welfare, Ashida; and Foreign Minister Yoshida. Here, too, the conversations centered on the task of Christianity in the rebuilding of Japan.

The deputation found Kagawa with undiminished faith in the future of the Christian enterprise. With more than his customary vigor this world-renowned Christian is busily at work on many fronts including evangelism, the organization of cooperatives, the relief of the homeless and needy and the strengthening of the Social Democratic Party. Time and again Kagawa said to the American churchmen "Give us your prayers, send us Bibles and good missionaries."

The influential *Nippon Times* in a two column editorial entitled "The Visit of the American Religious Leaders" commented on the significance and timeliness of the visitation. "The present visit in Japan of four prominent religious leaders, comprising a deputation representing the Protestant churches of America, is a matter which should interest the general Japanese public no less than the Japanese Christians," said the *Times*. "For, although the avowed purpose of this deputation is to reestablish contact with the Japanese Christians and to survey the general postwar religious situation in Japan, the influence of such visitors will far transcend mere matters of church policy. The work of this deputation is bound to mark a significant first milestone on the road of Japan's return to the international fellowship of peace-minded peoples."

## Communication

An Army Chaplain, stationed in the Pacific Theater, writes us as follows concerning peacetime military training:

"On our hospital ship carrying patients, Medical Corps officers and enlisted men back from Manila, we took a poll on the subject of peacetime military training. Of the 601 ballots returned, 443 were in favor; 112 against; and 46 were in doubt. I tried to find the reasons for the strong support in conversations with the men. For some it was out and out a matter of security. The Japs caught us unprepared this time. If they had followed up their advantage at Pearl Harbor, we would have been fighting at the Rockies. We can't take such chances again. For others, it was the uncharitable wish that others go through what they have been forced to undergo in the last five years or so. Still others somehow had the feeling that if the plan was adopted, they might get their discharge sooner. Few with whom I spoke had thought deeply on the matter. Of those enlisted men who had, most were against. Of the officers, most were in favor.

"My own feeling on the matter is that peacetime military training as envisaged by the Army would be the wrong way to approach the problem of security. It would lead to the dangers pointed out in John Bennett's article in *Christianity and Crisis* for July 9, 1945—the excessive pursuit of security. It would serve to divert attention from the national and international problems to be solved by cooperation among large and small nations. It would bring the idea of defense or national strength right into people's homes, and lull us to sleep. Further, it represents a collectivism of the right in its tie-up between big business (as shown by the make-up of the Citizen's Committee for Universal Military Training, Inc.) and military leaders.

"This is not a pacifist argument. Let us have military preparedness of adequate nature. But let the United States take the leadership in world cooperation, and let us find some better way for the effective utilization of our man power in the service of country in peacetime than training to gold-brick and pass the buck, and practise in obeying officers who too often are superior only in rank."

### Dr. Garbett Appeals to Americans For Increased Aid to Europe

An appeal to the American people for increased aid to starving war-sufferers in Europe came from London by Dr. Cyril Forster Garbett, Archbishop of York.

Presiding at a public meeting at the Albert Hall, Dr. Garbett also called on British authorities to do all in their power to fight starvation and disease in Europe. He warned that unless speedy and urgent action is taken, Europe may witness "a catastrophe setting back for centuries the recovery of western civilization."

"In the years to come," Dr. Garbett said, "the victors will be judged at the bar of humanity by the way they answered the cry of multitudes in such tragic distress."

He urged that mass migration of Germans from the East be discouraged during the winter. (RNS)



# The World Church: News and Notes

## Message of the German Evangelical Church to the World Council

In a meeting of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany held on October 18th and 19th in Stuttgart, the following significant greeting to the representatives of the World Council of Churches was adopted:

"We are the more grateful for this visit as we with our people know ourselves to be not only in a great company of sorrow, but also in a solidarity of guilt. With great pain do we say: Through us has endless suffering been brought to many people and countries. What we have often borne witness to in our own congregations that we declare in the name of the whole Church. True we have struggled for many years in the name of Jesus Christ against the spirit which has found its terrible expression in the National Socialist regime of violence, but we accuse ourselves for not being more courageous, for not praying more faithfully, for not believing more joyously and for not loving more ardently.

"Now a new beginning is to be made in our churches founded on the Holy Scriptures directed with all earnestness on the only Lord of the Church. They now proceed to cleanse themselves from influences alien to the faith and to set themselves in order. Our hope is in the God of Grace and Mercy that He will use our churches as His instruments and will give them authority to proclaim His word and in obedience to His will to work creatively among ourselves and among our whole people. That in this new beginning we may become wholeheartedly united with other churches of the ecumenical fellowship fills us with deep joy.

"We hope in God that through the common service of the churches the spirit of violence and revenge which again today wishes to become powerful, may be brought under control in the whole world and the spirit of peace and love may gain the mastery wherein alone, tortured humanity can find healing.

"So in an hour in which the whole world needs a new beginning, we pray 'Veni Creator Spiritus.'"

## Jugoslav Constitution Abolishes Church-Controlled Schools

Complete separation of church and state, abolition of church-controlled schools, and compulsory civil marriages are specified in the proposed new constitution of Jugoslavia, according to the text published in newspapers throughout the country.

The charter stipulates that "valid marriage can only be concluded before state representatives" but that "citizens may conclude, besides a civil marriage, a religious marriage according to religious prescriptions."

The juridical relations of marriage are defined as having been established by the state, and jurisdiction in matrimonial disputes is reserved to competent state tribunals.

The charter guarantees freedom of conscience and religion to all citizens, and assures full rights to all religious groups in administering their affairs and conducting religious rites. (RNS)

## German Church Members Raise Funds for Refugees

Between 14 and 17 million marks, or about \$1,500,000, are being raised by church members in Germany to aid homeless and starving refugees this winter, Pastor Eugen Gerstenmaier, relief director for the Evangelical Church of Germany announced.

Pastor Gerstenmaier, who came to Switzerland to purchase goods for distribution in the Berlin area of Germany, said that five million marks had been collected in Bavaria and more than three million in Wurttemberg, and that six to eight million are sought in Hesse, the Rhineland, Hanover, and Hamburg.

Pastors and church relief offices in the eastern zone of Germany will distribute these funds to the needy for purchases of food and clothing that may be available there, according to Gerstenmaier. He estimated that some 12 million persons are wandering the countryside east of Berlin.

Gerstenmaier, who participated in the July 20 attempt on Hitler's life, said that American military headquarters in Frankfurt had given him permission to take his purchases from Switzerland to Berlin, and had also approved transportation. (RNS)

## French Social Congress Protests Transfer of Populations

The transfer of populations from Eastern Germany was protested in Paris by the Congress of Social Christianity as "a cruelty which is a victory won over the Allies by the spirit against which they took up arms."

Meeting for the first time in several years, the Congress urged the Allies to "step in without delay to give food and shelter to these immense human crowds lost in despair." It called upon the French government "to bring honor to the French so victimized by the Germans by taking such a step which is in line with their true genius."

On the question of war guilt, the Congress declared that "a clear distinction should be made between the moral responsibilities of the German people as a whole . . . and the legal and exact responsibility of the criminals who are to be handed over individually to justice."

It asked that the German people "be not deprived of the possibility of being reinstated before other peoples and resuming a normal life amongst them." (RNS)

## Tokyo Anglican Bishop Sees God's Hand in Japanese Surrender

Japan's surrender "was God's way of opening the road to peace," the Rt. Rev. Paul Shini Sasaki, Anglican Bishop of mid-Japan, declared at Holy Trinity Church in Tokyo. He added that a Japanese victory "would only have increased the problems of the nation and the world." Bishop Sasaki spoke to a congregation of Japanese and GI's. A communion service was part of the worship. (RNS)

# Christianity and Crisis

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## New Protestant Weekly Published in Berlin

A new Protestant weekly, *Die Kirche* (The Church)—first of its kind in Berlin since 1941—began publication here under sponsorship of Bishop Otto Dibelius of the Evangelical Church. It is edited by Dr. K. Boehme, with permission of the American military government.

The first issue contained articles, editorials and news reports, and stressed relations with foreign churches, a subject in which the German churches, prior to the war, were only mildly interested. In an article on Christianity in the United States, Dr. Boehme deplored pre-war reporting of American church life in the German religious press and said, "It will be an important aim of ours to rectify this."

Three authors contributed articles emphasizing the sense of war-guilt among Christians in Germany. Dr. Dibelius, one of the writers, stated that occupation forces have called for a de-Nazification of the clergy, but have left it to church authorities to initiate and enforce this policy.

Dr. Dibelius said new opportunities have been opened to the church in Germany, citing the case of a new school in southwest Berlin where all but two of the 950 parents whose children are enrolled voted in favor of religious instruction.

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News columns contained a report that the world-famous Oberammergau Passion Play will be held again next year, and a reply by Professor Jasper, Heidelberg philosopher ousted by the Nazis, to the charge by Sigrid Undset, Norwegian novelist, that the German people are incapable of re-education. "It can be done," Dr. Jasper stated, "if the Bible is again made the foundation of German life." (RNS)

## Service Men Debate Conscription Issue

The January issue of *The Link*, organ of the National Council of the Service Men's Christian League, contains a debate on compulsory military service between various service men.

"Such training is against American ideals," agrees Pfc. George Day, "but it is time we Americans woke up to the fact that this is a 'real life' world and not some idealistic dream world. People hate us. The best way to keep out of trouble is to be ready to meet it."

"There is no reason to believe that conscription will frighten future aggressor nations," counters Corporal W. A. Rice, another overseas combat soldier. "Let the kids have a chance to do the things we have been denied. I say, and with all sincerity, we must not draft in time of peace!"

"Compulsory military training immediately eliminates freedom of conscience," argues Yeoman Arthur E. Nelson, from N. S. A., Jacksonville. "Also, such training breeds war rather than helping to maintain peace. I think history will support the statement that wherever there is military training the moral standards are lowered."

"A feeling of unity, gained during the war" is a reason assigned by Corporal Roy C. Bauch of a Combat Engineer Group for favoring peacetime military training of compulsory type.

"The fact that America is peace-loving and religious does not mean that other nations will be the same," contends Sergeant Thomas G. Carson, with the infantry in Germany.

"But our one great hope for peace is a more generous acceptance and application of Christ's principles," urges Lieut. William V. Wright, an infantry officer. Evidently this writer favors a demonstration of America's faith in other countries as one means of offering its Christian witness in these days.

Officers and enlisted men of 53rd General Hospital were canvassed by Chaplain Albert M. B. Snapp. Forty of the men would vote against peacetime conscription, seventy for it. These seventy qualified approval to this effect: "We are not in favor of regular Army-style training for these boys. It should be more like R.O.T.C. or in the form of industrial trades fitted to military training."

## Authors in This Issue

David E. Roberts is Associate Professor of the Philosophy of Religion and Systematic Theology at the Union Theological Seminary.

Walter W. Van Kirk is Secretary of the Department of International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.